

with a 500 ft. beam, we decided to have another try. Running the spot-light over the Red Gum clearing where the panther had been seen, the beam picked him up some 50 yards away. (By the way another planting friend, together with my 12 bore and lethal, accompanied us on this mission.) Shot number three,—a clean miss. Turned the car, and on the return journey, found the compounder standing near his house, and no doubt wondering what the bag of hares amounted to. More in temper than meaning it, I shouted to him to tie up a damned cow. Back to the bungalow and dinner! No sooner had we started soup, when the compounder sent word to say his cow was being killed.

Three of us were soon down on the road again. After finding the kill, in the beam of the spot-light, we proceeded to await events. The spot-light was switched off, but at the same time trained on the 'kill'. After some five minutes a stone had been dislodged, and came rolling down towards the car. My friend switched on the light, which found the panther lying alongside the cow. From me, Bang! Hell! and miss.

Back to dinner in all earnest this time. Halfway through the meal, I suddenly had a 'hunch', If he'll come back four times, why not the fifth? Three of us again went down to the kill. The spot-light showed no intruder, so we decided to wait for a while. After perhaps ten minutes a noise was heard in the vicinity of the 'kill', less than forty yards away. This time I meant to throw all caution to the wind, so stepped in front of the spot-light before it was switched on. The light was then switched on; and found his lordship sitting on his haunches at the side of the kill. Like the previous four shots, it was a 'sitter', but of course with the light at the back of the sights, it made all the difference. This time he toppled over and rolled towards us, until finally held up by a drain. In this, he struggled for a second or so, until my friend fired a lethal bullet at him. The skin was in no way damaged, but in case my friend reads this article, I think he probably gave the stupid panther the *coup de grâce*. A perfect specimen of a male panther, with no outward signs of any previous wounds. Could he possibly have been stone deaf? It is difficult to put any other construction on his persistent folly of remaining in the area after having been shot at four times prior to the final shot.

CLOUDLAND ESTATE,  
CUMBUM P. O.,  
MADURA, S. I.  
6th January, 1947.

H. GIBBON.

#### 4.—REVERSAL OF FEEDING HABITS IN A DEER AND A DOG.

Conditions of captivity may bring about extraordinary changes in the habits of animals.

A deer and a dog were kept as pets for three years from their early days. Curiously the distinction between their feeding habits vanished. The carnivorous dog swallows vegetables (cabbages, cauliflower, and peels of fruits), with great pleasure and the herbivorous deer relishes the flesh of a goat. Now they are great friends with each other. One will not eat unless the other is present and vice-versa.

Vegetable feeding among dogs is not so uncommon and may be seen both in the wild state and under domestication. But for the deer, which was caught in the forest when probably 3 weeks old and reared under captivity, its abrupt change to a carnivorous diet is perplexing. How its digestive system could accommodate such a complete change in food, is unexplained. How an unaccustomed protein meal is digested by its normal gastric secretion is unknown.

The author will be thankful to his learned readers for an explanation.

These two curious pets belong to Mrs. K. L. Lahiry; to her the author's best thanks are due.

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35, BALLYGUNJ CIRCULAR ROAD,  
5th November, 1946.

##### 5.—NATURAL DEATH OF ELEPHANT.

Your comments contained in the last paragraph of the *B.N.H. Journal* for August 1946, under the above heading, rings a comforting note in my memory.

Whilst lecturing on Jungle Lore in the capacity of Commandant of No. 2 Jungle Training School in Ceylon during the war, I could always rely on one of the 'grand lads' putting forward the usual chestnut! 'Where do elephants go to die? and do they resort to a common burial ground? My reply coincided almost verbatim with your comments; with the following addition. 'Excepting thigh and skull bones, I have known a fully grown dead cow elephant completely disappear within a period of two months.' Although the putrefying flesh and blood killed the grass and vegetation over the area on which the carcase lay, within a short time,—no doubt due to phosphates and other mineral properties,—this grass and vegetation eventually grew to a greater profusion than previously. This, I think, largely accounts, in addition to your factors, for the lack of evidence where the death of large animals is concerned. Burial grounds. This to my mind is mythical!! Where traces of large collections of animal bones have been found; more especially in the case of pre-historic findings, this I attribute to one of the following causes. (1) Disease. (2) Land-slide. (3) Trapped in a glacier.